

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Monday, December 10, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Hagenow, Leon, Luxenberg, Pattacini, Scappaticci, Walton

ALSO PRESENT: Interim Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

ABSENT:

A. OPENING

A.1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Dr. Kisiel. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Dr. Kisiel. Dr. Kisiel asked everyone to observe a moment of silence in honor of Malvrick Donkor. It was noted that this Saturday a service celebrating Malvrick's life will be held at Manchester High School at 6:00 p.m. with a private viewing for the family, 7:00-8:00 p.m. would be a public viewing, and a service from 8:00-9:30. Following the service, a celebration will be held in the cafeteria.

Secretary Leon moved to change the agenda, moving Item B1 to A2 and renumbering A2-5 to A3-6. Ms. Walton seconded the motion.

8/0 – Voted in favor.

A.2. MHS ROUNDTABLE SINGERS

Mr. Edward Tyler introduced the Roundtable Singers, who sang several holiday songs for the audience. Mr. Tyler noted a full concert will be held Wednesday at 7:30 at MHS and is free to the public.

A.3. ACTION TO FILL BOARD MEMBER VACANCY

Mr. Crockett nominates Ron Atwater to fill the vacant seat on the Board. Mr. Atwater has been a Manchester resident for eight years and is an alcohol and drug counselor as well as a minister. His daughter attends Manchester

High School who is a member of the National Honor Society. Mr. Crockett notes that Mr. Atwater will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise as well as much needed diversity to the Board for this one year term through November 2013. Ms. Hagenow seconded the nomination.

Ms. Walton was not happy with the decision making process to support the nomination of Mr. Atwater. She feels strongly that the vote of eight people should not be able to circumvent the popular vote of the town. regardless of whether she agrees with the outcome of that vote or not. Ms. Walton feels that the Republican Party nomination to the Board should uphold the will of the voters seriously. This process was made unnecessarily difficult for Board members who are being asked to support the nomination of someone they may have never met or spoken to. This process was not in the best interests of the students we serve and is seriously flawed in asking Board members to make an uninformed decision. There were threats of negative attacks on character and behind closed doors politicking during this time and it has been disappointing. This is a process issue, not a partisan issue. Regardless of this process, Mr. Atwater will bring a much needed perspective to the Board and Ms. Walton supports his nomination.

Mr. Crockett thanked Ms. Walton for her comments. He noted the process used to fill a vacancy has been in place for many years and is part state law, part charter, and part Board policy. He notes that one-third of the democrats on this Board were appointed and not elected and those rules are in place. He also notes that anyone willing to serve in this capacity – may God bless them – we need more people like that and he appreciates her support of the nomination.

Mr. Leon had similar sentiments as Ms. Walton on the process and felt that just because “it’s always been done” doesn’t mean we shouldn’t fix it. He supports Mr. Atwater’s nomination.

Ms. Luxenberg noted this is an exciting time as the Board can regain its focus and she looks forward to turning a new page as we welcome Mr. Atwater to the Board.

Mr. Pattacini supports Ms. Walton and Mr. Leon’s feelings regarding the process which placed the Board in an intractable position with members having to choose between two alternatives which were not necessarily fair, having nothing to do with Mr. Atwater, but rather to do with how Board members were treated throughout the process. Mr. Pattacini does not agree the Board should act in the manner it has leading up to the events here this evening, including politics and coercion. Mr. Pattacini thanked Mr. Scappaticci, Ms. Luxenberg, and Ms. Walton for reaching out to Mr. Atwater to schedule an opportunity to meet him. Mr. Pattacini expressed

disappointment that there was no reasoned debate about the process, diversity, and other factors. He supports process issues that need to be addressed. Mr. Pattacini notes it is important to reflect the diversity of the community and find the highest quality candidates, including minority candidates, to sit on the Board. He commends the Republicans for bringing forward a minority candidate. He looks forward to the Democratic Party doing the same in November when it has the opportunity. It is important to work together in support of the important decisions in front of the Board, and we can't afford to have items framed in the way this was, with a situation that could damage the Board or otherwise distract it from its work. Mr. Pattacini believes it is in the best interests to support Mr. Atwater's nomination.

The vote was called.

7/0/1 – Voted in favor with Ms. Cruz abstaining.

A.4. ELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR AND BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Walton nominates Christopher Pattacini to service as Chair for the Board of Education. Mr. Leon seconded nomination.

Mr. Crockett said he has seen a side of people he is not happy with recently and cannot support Mr. Pattacini as chair, though he feels he has been a great Board member.

The vote was called.

**7/1/0 – Voted in favor with Mr. Crockett voting against.
Mr. Pattacini declined to vote.**

The gavel was passed to Chairperson Pattacini.

Ms. Luxenberg nominated Mr. Leon for his second term as Board Secretary. Mr. Scappaticci seconded the nomination.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

A.5. OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEW TERM BOARD MEMBERS

Town Clerk Joseph Camposeo was present to swear in Mr. Atwater for his new appointment, along with Ms. Cruz, Mr. Crockett, and Mr. Leon for their new terms as Board Members of the Manchester Board of Education to support the Constitution of the United States of America, the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, and the Town Charter of Manchester, Connecticut.

A.6. REAFFIRM BOARD OF EDUCATION BYLAWS – 9000 SERIES

Secretary Leon moved to reaffirm the Board of Education bylaws – 9000 series. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

9/0 – Voted in favor.

A.7. ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of November 14, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0/3 – Voted in favor. Mr. Atwater, Ms. Walton, and Ms. Hagenow abstained.

B. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Status Report on School District Improvement Plan

Dr. Kisiel provided a written update on the District Improvement Plan to the Board. A copy of this is available on the website.

Regarding the Early Intervention Opportunities, Ms. Walton inquired how the students would be recruited and selected for this program. Dr. Kisiel stated those with no Pre-K experience would be targeted and various methods would be utilized, including the School Readiness Program, those that were turned down by Head Start, private daycares, as well as advertising.

Ms. Walton inquired where the programs would be held. Dr. Kisiel hopes that each elementary school will be able to house their own students, though roofing projects in some schools may need to be worked around.

Ms. Walton wondered if transportation would be provided for this program and what the capacity would be. Dr. Kisiel stated that next year transportation would be included.

Ms. Walton next asked about the instructional interventions at the K-6 level in literacy and numeracy and how those resources would be distributed. Dr. Kisiel stated the tutors would be equitably assigned throughout the district, which each elementary school receiving at least one tutor, and those with the greatest need receiving more. The need is determined by the number of students requiring tutoring, the number of ELL students, as well as data performance numbers.

Ms. Walton wondered why we are waiting until December to train teachers on how to implement and administer online assessments. Dr. Kisiel noted that training occurs periodically through the year, but now we are moving to computer assisted testing and the grant money was not available until September 22nd. Time was needed to plan and prepare and 650 computers are now available, with 250 becoming available soon.

Ms. Walton inquired if there was a pilot cycle of testing. Dr. Kisiel answered yes, the immediate data can be used to work out glitches and the May data will be the baseline. We will start looking at data on January 18th.

Ms. Walton wondered if this pilot cycle would be for K-6 and Dr. Kisiel stated it was K-10.

Ms. Walton wondered if there was a strategy to align the six week summer program with the early start Pre-K program. Dr. Kisiel stated they are separate programs with separate intensions and there was no plan to align them. Ms. Walton thought having the calendars of the programs align would be helpful for any families with children in both programs. Dr. Kisiel felt that made sense and he will look into that possibility. He noted for the six week program the 700 students will be housed in two schools: Grades K-2 in Highland Park and Grades 3-6 in Bennet. Both schools are air-conditioned.

Ms. Walton wondered how students would be recruited and engaged in this program. She would like to see it academically supportive and fun. Dr. Kisiel reviewed that the former Director of Curriculum in Enfield, Linda Cavanaugh, was hired to head this program and the goal is an enjoyable and academically rewarding and enriching program. Efforts will be made to provide enriching instruction to help maintain or improvement skills over the summer.

Ms. Walton next inquired about the after school program for students who are not achieving at grade level. Dr. Kisiel reviewed that this pilot will begin at Bowers for the second half of the school year. The principal at Bowers, Dr. Ruggiero, and teachers will identify students that qualify and make contact with parents. The program will be academically supportive and offer a very little bit of recreation and a snack.

Ms. Walton appreciates all these efforts that are aimed at narrowing the achievement gap. She would like to see the Board be presented with school-based arrest data on a quarterly basis in the future. Dr. Kisiel stated he met with Chief Montiminy last week and he will submit that data soon.

Mr. Scappaticci wondered how the search for an assessment tool regarding TRACK was going. Dr. Kisiel stated they are still in the process of finding the appropriate tool.

Mr. Scappaticci asked about the credit recovery program. Dr. Kisiel noted the current program is not really operational for those students lacking credits early on or considering withdrawing. This program will target those already withdrawn or considering withdrawal to get them back on track.

B.2. MOU Regarding Great Path Academy at Manchester Community College

Dr. Kisiel asked that we table this topic to a future meeting. He feels the memorandum of understanding does not reflect our concerns. In 2001 a group of Superintendents felt it was time to provide an opportunity for students who were excelling to experience college at an earlier time. In 2004 a governing body was established by votes of the Boards of Education and in establishing that governing board specific responsibilities were established. From 2004-2011, the management of the Great Path Academy was turned over to CREC because the Superintendents did not feel they had the time to devote to overseeing management issues at the school. This essentially changed the structure of the way the governing body was operating. It became more of an overseer to be sure the program was being carried out. Under Sheff, there was a change in how students are enrolled. In prior years the students were chosen based on a quota of the original group of towns, and now enrollment is governed by a lottery. The current agreement in front of the Board, particularly items 1 & 5, are in question. There is still statute on the books that says these magnet schools are governed by a governing body. There is pending legislation to change that. Considering the pending legislation, the recommendation was to change 1 to state that the Boards of Education and Manchester Community College support the dissolution of the Great Path Governing Board due to anticipated changes in the current governing structure under the legislature. At the same time, regarding #5, the Superintendents spoke to the President of the College about changing this language slightly, because Dr. Kisiel feels oversight is still necessary and participating school districts still need to have a voice in the program for guidance and advice. The suggestion is for #5 to read that the undersigned support the creation of an Alliance of Participating School Districts to act in an advisory capacity. This is far more common with magnet schools today than the current governing body structure.

B.3. Budget Calendar

Mrs. Brooks reviewed the schedule for the budget season for the 2013-14 budget. January 9th is the first budget workshop where the Superintendent will present his recommended budget to the Board. Workshops will be held through January 25th as needed, at MHS in Rm. 293. Once the Board

approves the budget, it goes to the town by February 13th. March 22nd is the last date for a public hearing and by the first week of April the Board of Directors will approve a budget. Workshops will again be held in May to adjust the Board of Education budget to align with the approved budget and in June 2013 the adopted budget will be printed.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented nine items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval. It is noted that Items 7 & 8 in the agenda had typographical errors, but the below list reflects the correct items as listed in the full documents attached to the agenda.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

C.2. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$200,000 for the FY2012-13 for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant for the after school programs at Washington, Verplanck, and Robertson Elementary Schools

C.3. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$1,699,463 in the final grant funding to the Manchester Board of Education under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 611 grant for FY2011-13

C.4. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$101,818 for FY2012-13 for the Manchester Head Start annual grant from the State Department of Education for the expansion of its services to low-income families

C.5. Permission to Apply for the Federal Enfield Head Start Grant in the amount of \$802,662 for 3/1/13-2/28/14

C.6. Permission to apply for the Federal Enfield Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Grant in the amount of \$11,137 for 3/1/13 – 2/28/14

C.7. Permission to apply for the Federal Manchester Head Start Grant in the amount of \$1,154,099 for 3/1/13 – 2/28/14

C.8. Permission to Apply for the Federal Head Start Training Grant in the amount of \$15,312 for 3/1/13 – 2/28/14

C.9. Transfer of Funds

- Transfer from Bowers Elementary School Administrator Professional Development to Bowers Elementary School Administrator Dues/Fees account in the amount of \$126.00.
- Transfer from Bowers Elementary School Administrator Postage to Bowers Elementary School Administrator Contract Service account in the amount of \$400.00.
- Transfer from Martin Elementary School Administrator General Supplies/Materials to Martin Elementary School Administrator In-Service account in the amount of \$2,100.00.
- Transfer from Manchester Pre-School/Head Start Travel/Lodge to Manchester Pre-School/Head Start Professional Development account in the amount of \$800.00.

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, Item C on the agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Pattacini wondered if he has authorization to sign the paper Mrs. Brooks gave him regarding Request for the 5 year Federal Grant Cycle. Mrs. Brooks stated that is listed on the Consent Calendar.

Ms. Luxenberg noted that it is a sad day for the District to see Ms. Linda DelNegro is retiring and thanked her for her dedicated service. Ms. DelNegro was one of Ms. Luxenberg's teachers in high school and she well prepared her for college.

Mr. Scappaticci echoed the sentiments of Ms. Luxenberg, and stated Ms. DelNegro also prepared him very well for college and how to write a research paper.

The vote was called.

9/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, congratulated the Roundtable Singers for their performance. He wishes them much success in years to come. Mr. Stringfellow welcomes Mr. Atwater to the Board and is glad to see diversity on the Board, noting that the Board of Directors has none. Mr. Stringfellow

expressed dismay over the politics and stated we need to move forward with what is best for all students and set aside egos and do what is right.

Mr. Stringfellow recommended that Soledad O'Brien CNN broadcast, "Black in America". He also noted the 71st anniversary of Pearl Harbor is this year and recommended the book *Attack on Pearl Harbor*. Mr. Stringfellow noted this is the 237th anniversary of the Marine Corps. He also recommended the Lincoln movie, stating it was excellent.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

E.1. Debriefing of Highland Park School

Mr. Christopher Till and Mr. Brian Murphy gave a presentation on the Highland renovation, including lessons learned for future projects. The full report is available on-line.

Mr. Leon noted he is pleased with the outcome and wondered if the full punch list of items has been completed. Mr. Till stated most of the list, which was quite extensive, has been done and about 20 minor items remain on the list still.

Mr. Leon asked if the project came in at budget. It did, though there is one issue with a trade contract still being resolved and that may impact the end result within \$50,000. Mr. Leon wondered if Mr. Till was satisfied with the CM and architect. He was satisfied with Gilbane.

Mr. Leon asked what the gentlemen felt was an ideal time frame from the time the Board states what they want to get to referendum without rushing.

Mr. Murphy talked about the scope of what we want the architect to do, a feasibility study, not necessarily digging into design, but do due diligence. The scope has to be broad and take into account testing (PCB, soil, etc.). It is cheaper to pay for testing early on then encounter problems later. Mr. Murphy encourages selecting one architect to do the design and be accountable for the end product, taking into account any possible legislative changes that are planned. Mr. Murphy noted the referendum has to be to the Board of Directors by August and he feels we need to get going by February at the latest, having an architect on board by January 31st.

Mr. Leon noted, with budget season approaching, we still need to budget for maintaining current systems, even with this potential project in the future plans.

Mr. Murphy noted this has been a town-wide effort and the taxpayers should be proud of the town government that worked together on this project.

Ms. Walton noted that Mr. Murphy is “worth his weight in gold” to the SMARTR Committee.

Mr. Crockett wondered if there were any major complaints with the renovation of Highland Park? Dr. Kisiel noted no major issues.

Mr. Crockett wondered how we avoid substantial value engineering. Mr. Murphy states we need to hire an architect early that will be the final design architect to be sure the scope is comprehensive so there are fewer surprises.

Mr. Crockett wondered, in hindsight, if it would have been better to build new for Highland instead of renovating, as well as for future projects. Mr. Murphy is typically in favor of new but it is a toss up. With building new there is no need for swing space as students can remain in the current building until the new building is ready. In new construction there is also flexibility in room sizes. Serious discussion has to occur in determining whether it is better to build new or renovate Washington.

Ms. Walton clarified this discussion is on a school by school basis and each situation may be different, depending on the building.

Mr. Pattacini noted this was a successful project and we touched on what can be done differently next time, but what might the Board do differently? Mr. Murphy noted having enough money to hire an architect early in the project and giving strong consideration to whether to renovate or build new.

Mr. Pattacini was unsure how to get information on like-new versus new costs. Mr. Murphy felt there may not be enough time to do a thorough study on Washington to get to a November referendum on new versus like-new.

Mr. Pattacini asked who was responsible to hire an architect for this. Mr. Till noted they are in the process of drafting a request for an architect through the SMARTR Committee and we are on schedule to have an RFP by the end of January, following state statutes for architect selection. Mr. Pattacini notes we need to have a plan in place by February 1st and have an architect selected. Mr. Till stated it takes 4-6 weeks to select an architect. Mr. Pattacini wondered if we can engage an architect without the plan in place, and Mr. Murphy stated we cannot, as they will not know what they are bidding on. Typically a 9 person committee does architect selection, comprised of three representatives from the Board of Education, 3 town staff, and 3 building committee members.

Mr. Leon feels that with no recommendation from SMARTR on the facilities side, with the next Board meeting being January 14th and the like-new versus new question, he doesn't see us making a November referendum.

Mr. Pattacini amends his request to SMARTR to include looking at alternatives so we can get something on the November ballot. We also could have a special meeting prior to January 14th to speed things up if needed.

Ms. Walton asked Dr. Kisiel if it would be appropriate to ask Dr. Kisiel to work with Scott Shanley in terms of consulting with an architect to see if it is feasible in the meantime. Dr. Kisiel agreed.

Ms. Cruz asked if it was possible to hold a meeting prior to January 14th. Mr. Pattacini agreed it was possible, a special meeting could be requested as soon as SMARTR has a recommendation.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS

None.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

None.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

I.1. Personnel & Finance Committee

Ms. Hagenow reported that the last meeting was held on November 28th with herself, Mr. Crockett, Mr. Pattacini, and Mrs. Brooks in attendance. The Committee reviewed the November 30th financial report and the budget calendar. The next meeting will be held on December 19, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at Central Office.

I.2. SMARTR Committee

Mr. Crockett reported the Committee has been meeting just about every Wednesday through the fall. He noted the creation of two sub-committees, one to review a potential magnet school and one to do some additional research regarding facilities. He notes reports from those sub-committees are due at Wednesday night's meeting. Mr. Crockett stated the educational model being concentrated on is K-4, 5-6 at Bennet, 7-8 at Illing, and 9-12 at MHS. He notes this is all far from happening and there are many stages to go through. He spoke about possibly housing 5th grade in the Cheney Building on School Street and there is money set aside for an architectural study to determine if that can happen. That will open up room potentially for

pre-K in some schools and give the elementary schools some much-needed breathing room.

Ms. Cruz reiterated the October requests from the Board to the SMARTR Committee and would like a full update no later than the next Board meeting regarding:

1. The educational model;
2. The 3 priority elementary schools; and
3. The magnet school recommendation.

Ms. Cruz feels the Board needs to decide if a magnet school is a viable choice and timing is essential if there is any possibility of a fall referendum.

Ms. Walton stated it is important to remember that when talking about the SMARTR Committee – they are not making decisions; they are simply putting forth recommendations for the Board’s consideration. Ms. Walton notes that the Board shared their priority list with SMARTR in October and SMARTR has done an excellent job of exploring those options. As far as the educational model, the committee work is done there.

Mr. Leon, who is a member of SMARTR, states he is disappointed with the committee, even with the hard work of the individuals. He notes the original charge was to have a recommendation back in June 2012 and now it is December and he is worried about the timing. Mr. Leon feels a recommendation needs to be forthcoming soon or he feels the Board of Education should move forward with their own recommendation on the 3 priority schools with Washington at the top of that list.

Ms. Cruz appreciates Ms. Walton’s comments and does not feel it is too much to ask for a recommendation by the next Board meeting.

I.3. Buildings & Sites Committee

Mr. Leon stated the last meeting was held December 6th at Washington with Mr. Crockett, Mr. Leon, and Mr. Ziegler in attendance. The committee toured the school and reviewed the projects completed last summer, including the gym floor refinishing and removal of the gym dividing partition.

The referendum projects, including roof replacements at Bowers, Waddell, and Verplanck, are being planned for next summer. Other project schedules are to be determined.

The solar energy project was reviewed by Mr. Ziegler. Robertson has been eliminated as a consideration due to qualifications related to roof condition.

A surplus equipment auction has been advertised with inspection of items scheduled for December 19th from 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Nathan Hale, with all bids due December 27th at 10:00 a.m.

The next meeting will be held January 3, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at Buckley.

J. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports most of the Consent Calendar, especially the IDA report. He suggested an article on a Braille reader in the *Boston Globe*, noting 70% of blind people are unemployed, but of those employed, 80% can read Braille.

Regarding the School Improvement Plan, he recommended the State Board of Education meeting on December 5th talked about the Common Core.

Mr. Stringfellow noted CPTV had talked about Project Graduation and cutting down on the drop-out rate. He mentioned Bill Gates' interview on technology and grants.

To the SMARTR Committee, Mr. Stringfellow wished good luck and asked that they get the information to the public as soon as possible.

Mr. Stringfellow recommended a book, *Teaching College – An Idiot's Guide*.

Mr. Stringfellow wished everyone a good holiday and new year. He implored the Board to really listen to the public. He also requested Ms. Philbert be put on the agenda to speak, as well as other presenters he has requested in the past. He feels the Board is doing a good job.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Walton noted the State Board of Education recently released a position statement on a culturally responsive education and she would like that be reviewed by Board members and that the Superintendent highlight things that are being done in Manchester that align to that position statement. Dr. Kisiel noted that Ms. Walton had already passed along that position statement and Dr. Kisiel had passed it along to the Board members to review. At some point in the future there will be a Board meeting discussion about it and he will highlight what is happening in Manchester in regard to our efforts to respond to culturally responsive education.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

**Secretary Leon moved and Ms. Cruz seconded the motion
to adjourn the meeting.**

9/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary